

Listed Waterbody: Santa Maria and Oso Flaco**Listed Condition:** Nitrate

Designated Beneficial Uses: The Basin Plan identifies beneficial uses for many of the listed waterbodies within the Santa Maria and Oso Flaco watersheds. The beneficial use likely to be impacted by nitrates is municipal and domestic supply (MUN).

Watershed Location: Northern portion of Santa Barbara County and Southern portion of San Luis Obispo County

Year added to California's CWA Section 303(d) List of Impaired Waters - 2002

Project Planning Schedule:

Task	Projected Complete	Status/Notes
Project Definition	June 2003	Complete
Draft Project Plan (including Stakeholder Plan)	December 2003	Active
Project Plan	June 2004	Active
Data Collection and Analysis	June 2006*	Not started
Preliminary Project Report	June 2007*	Not started
Project Report	June 2008*	Not started

* Actual schedule start dates are pending region-wide prioritization and allocated staff and contract resources for continued project development. Staff Contact: Katie McNeill, phone: (805) 549-3336, e-mail: kmcneill@rb3.swrcb.ca.gov

Background and Preliminary Analysis:

This Project Plan addresses multiple nitrate listings within the Oso Flaco and Santa Maria watersheds. The listed waterbodies are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Waterbodies listed for Nitrate within the Santa Maria and Oso Flaco watersheds.

Waterbody
Oso Flaco Lake
Oso Flaco Creek
Santa Maria River
Main Street Canal (Channel)
Orcutt Solomon Creek

The preliminary analyses that have been conducted to date are discussed in detail in the Project Definition; the conclusions are summarized below, along with recommendations of how to proceed with subsequent phases.

Problem Statement:

Regional Board staff evaluated nitrate data collected within the Oso Flaco and Santa Maria watersheds between 2000 to 2002, as part of the Central Coast Ambient Monitoring Program (CCAMP). Exceedances of the MUN water quality objective of 10 mg/l-N for nitrate occurred continuously at numerous monitoring locations. Staff concludes that the beneficial uses are impaired for nitrate in the Oso Flaco and Santa Maria watersheds.

Numeric Target:

The municipal drinking water supply (MUN) beneficial use is protected by the numeric water quality objective of 10 mg/l-N maximum for nitrate. The numeric target for the listed waterbodies will be consistent with this value.

Source Analysis:

Staff evaluated CCAMP data, conducted field visits to the Oso Flaco and Santa Maria watersheds and evaluated topographic maps and other information to determine primary sources of nitrate. Additional information is needed; however, to complete the source analysis for the listed waterbodies.

Staff recommends additional information be developed in order to quantify sources, allocate loads, and identify appropriate implementation actions. Staff recommends 1) obtaining more reliable and complete land use information, 2) obtaining and evaluating additional existing data, and 3) monitoring additional sites for nitrate and flow.

Staff plans to evaluate available land use GIS coverages of land uses (urban, cropland, rangeland) in the Santa Maria and Oso Flaco watersheds and pursue gathering additional information (e.g. from the Cachuma Resource Conservation District) as necessary.

Staff identified additional surface and groundwater data that may assist in developing the Source Analysis. This includes information collected by the County of Santa Barbara, Cachuma Resource Conservation District, County Flood Control District, City of Santa Maria, landfill, and wastewater treatment plants. The data will assist staff in determining relative nitrate inputs from various sources.

In addition to evaluating existing information, staff recommends collecting additional nitrate and streamflow data along several reaches to further differentiate sources, allocate loads, and identify implementation actions.

Implementation Options:

Establishment and implementation of the nitrate TMDLs for Oso Flaco Lake and Oso Flaco Creek will most likely rely solely on dischargers complying with the conditional waivers of Waste Discharge Requirements for discharges from irrigated lands (conditional waivers). In the Oso Flaco watershed numerous nonpoint source activities are occurring. Agricultural landowners within the Cachuma Resource Conservation District have developed the Oso Flaco Watershed Management Plan. If staff determines that urban land uses (i.e. from the Nipomo Mesa) are also contributing nitrates to the Oso Flaco watershed, then TMDL implementation will also rely on the County of San Luis Obispo carrying out activities in their Storm Water Management Plan (SWMP) pursuant to the Phase II NPDES General Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Permit (MS4). In this case, a Basin Plan Amendment would be necessary to establish the TMDLs.

Implementation of the Santa Maria River, Main Street Canal, and Orcutt Solomon Creek Nitrate TMDLs will most likely require multiple actions of the Regional Board. As such, staff recommends a Basin Plan Amendment that includes the following actions: 1) implementation of individual ranch and farm water quality management plans and the Santa Maria Estuary Enhancement and Management Plans, 2) implementation of the Watershed Coordinator's workplans, 3) compliance with the conditional waivers, 4) implementation of the City of Santa

Maria and County of Santa Barbara SWMPs pursuant to their MS4 permits, and 5) compliance with existing wastewater treatment plant NPDES permits.

Regional Board staff and stakeholders have identified additional nonpoint source efforts that will implement the nitrate TMDLs. These include, but are not limited to, permit streamlining (identified in the Watershed Coordinator's workplan) and expansion of the Santa Maria workgroup to include areas outside (two miles upstream from the mouth) of the existing Estuary Enhancement Plan scope. This outreach effort is part of an existing 319(h) project. Regional Board staff have prioritized Orcutt Solomon Creek for non-point source implementation activities. Staff is compiling an Interested Parties List for TMDL stakeholder involvement.

Information to evaluate TMDL progress will include data collected in the listed waterbodies by CCAMP, data collected by the County Flood Control District where Hobbs Basin and Unit Two Ditch enter the Santa Maria River, and information obtained via the five implementation actions described previously.

Stakeholder Involvement

Staff anticipates a low-medium to medium level of stakeholder involvement in the development of the nitrate TMDLs. Staff based this determination on the fact that there are few competing interests; committed, formal stakeholder groups attended by Regional Board Nonpoint Source Program staff; local implementation and monitoring; and adequate time exists in the schedule. Opportunities for interested parties to be involved include: providing data and other information to Regional Board staff, and providing review and comment on the Preliminary Project Report, Project Report, and Regulatory Action Plan (i.e. Basin Plan Amendments).

Project Planning:

Staff recommends TMDLs be developed for nitrate based on the information collected during the Project Definition and Project Planning phases. Below is a brief overview of three project steps (Phases 3-5), along with the subtasks and resources necessary to complete the tasks that can currently be projected in order to proceed with TMDL development. Staff may recommend addressing the waterbodies within the Santa Maria and Oso Flaco watersheds separately depending on the results of additional data collection and stakeholder outreach.

1. Phase 3: Project Data Collection and Analysis:

Who	Regional Board (RB) staff – project lead
Action Steps & Schedule	<p>Regional Board (RB) staff propose the following tasks for FY 05-06:</p> <p>Issues and Tasks for July 2005 – September 2005:</p> <p><u>3.1 Source Analysis – obtain and evaluate existing information from others</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ July 2005: Review available land use/ownership/jurisdictional boundary GIS information, and obtain more complete GIS shapefiles as necessary. ➤ August/September 2005: Obtain and evaluate existing surface and groundwater data. <p><u>3.2 Plan Stakeholder Involvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ July 2005: Coordinate with other Regional Board program staff, and lead stakeholders as necessary, to communicate project initiation, expectations, progress, and information that we are relying on (i.e. water quality data, existing nonpoint source efforts); gain any additional relevant information; and answer any questions.

	<p><u>Deliverable:</u> September 2005: <u>Progress Report</u> including analysis of land use category information, available data, and summary of public outreach and participation needs.</p> <p>Issues and Tasks for October 2005-June 2006:</p> <p><u>3.3 Source Analysis</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Conduct nitrate and flow monitoring to differentiate between urban and agricultural sources of nitrate and at Correlitos Creek to gain information on background levels. Staff estimates \$1700 for sampling based on 8 sampling periods. <p><u>3.4 Stakeholder involvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continue as necessary per Progress Report above. <p><u>Deliverable:</u> June 2006: <u>Data Analysis Report</u> summarizing available data and preliminary conclusions. Includes preliminary impairment assessment, source and loading analysis, and implementation alternatives.</p>
Cost (PY & \$)	<p><u>Staff Resources:</u> – Fiscal Year 05-06 allocation= 0.2 Personnel Years (PY): 0.1 PY for 3.1 and 3.2; 0.1 PY for 3.3 and 3.4.</p> <p><u>Contract Resources:</u> = \$1,700 contract laboratory funds for water quality analyses</p>
Issues	If any additional data collection activities are identified, they will be described in the Progress Report and Data Analysis Report.

2. Phase 4: Project Analysis - Preliminary Project Report(s):

Who	Regional Board staff – project lead Stakeholders (review draft reports & information transfer)
Action Steps & Schedule	<p>Issues and Tasks for June 2006 - June 2007:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 4.1 Develop Draft <u>Preliminary Project Report</u> using Data Analysis Report. ➤ 4.2 Stakeholders review draft version of the Preliminary Project Report and submit comments to RB staff (or RB staff hold meeting to solicit comments). The preliminary schedule anticipates a 12-month period to progress from a Preliminary Project Report to the Project Report. <p><u>Deliverable:</u> <u>Preliminary Project Report(s)</u> for Santa Maria and Oso Flaco nitrate TMDLs. The Preliminary Project Report will describe impairment assessment, source and loading analyses, and implementation alternatives. Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) and allocations for the various sources will be included in the Preliminary Project Report. Current applicable stakeholder activities in the watershed that will reduce fecal coliform levels; such as regular workgroup meetings, and efforts performed by the County Resource Conservation Districts, will be included. Staff will also include stakeholder involvement needs for the remainder of the project.</p>
Cost (PY & \$)	<p><u>Staff Resources:</u> – Fiscal Year 06-07 allocation= 0.3 Personnel Years (PY): 0.2 PY for 4.1; 0.1 PY for 4.2.</p> <p><u>Contract Resources:</u> = no RB3 contract money estimated at this time</p> <p><u>Other:</u> additional costs may be needed if project turns out to have a higher level of stakeholder interest than currently identified for Phase 4.</p>

Issues	None at this time.
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3. Phase 5: Regulatory Action Selection – Final Project Report(s):

Who	Regional Board staff – project lead Stakeholders (review draft reports & information transfer)
Action Steps & Schedule	Issues and Tasks for June 2007 - June 2008: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 5.1 Staff will develop the Project Report(s) (Draft Basin Plan Amendment package, or other regulatory action documentation) in consultation with state board and legal counsel. ➤ 5.2 The Project Report will be made available to all regional stakeholders for further comment, following the Board's normal public comment process. <u>Deliverable:</u> <u>Project Report(s)</u> for Santa Maria and Oso Flaco watersheds nitrate TMDLs.
Cost (PY & \$)	<u>Staff Resources:</u> — Fiscal Year 07-08 allocation= 0.2 Personnel Years (PY): 0.1 PY for 5.1; 0.1 PY for 5.2 <u>Contract Resources:</u> = no RB3 contract money estimated at this time <u>Other:</u> additional costs may be needed if project turns out to have a higher level of stakeholder interest than currently identified for Phase 5.
Issues	None at this time.

Budget and Schedule Uncertainties:*Budget:*

Depending on availability of contract resources.

Schedule:

Depending on region-wide prioritization, and allocation of staff and contract resources.

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